

**Remarks:**

**Status of Claims**

Claims 1-25 were previously pending. Claims 1, 8, 10, and 13 are amended herein. Thus, claims 1-25 are currently pending with claims 1, 15, 11, 18, and 21 being independent.

**Office Action**

In the October 19, 2005, Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 15-25 and rejected claims 1-14 in view of Schluter (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0059764). The Examiner also objected to the drawings and specification and rejected claims 8, 10, and 13 under 35 USC 112. The specification has been amended herein to correct the minor informality noted by the Examiner and claims 8, 10, and 13 have been amended to remove the language identified by the Examiner under 35 USC 112.

**Drawings**

The Examiner objected to the drawings for failing to illustrate the various embodiments of the first and second brackets found in claims 18 and 21. Applicant herein submits a new sheet of drawings including new figures 6 and 7. New FIG. 6 illustrates a first bracket and second bracket each presenting a socket (as claimed in claim 18) and new FIG. 7 illustrates a first bracket and second bracket each presenting a plug (as claimed in claim 21).

The addition of these figures does not constitute new matter as the configuration illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 7 was thoroughly described in the specification as filed (see MPEP 2163.06). Specifically, page 6, lines 11-26 fully describes the configuration shown in FIG. 6 and page 6, line 27 through page 7, line 3, fully describes the configuration shown in FIG. 7. The specification is also amended herein to include FIGS. 6 and 7 in the "Brief Description of the Drawings."

**Claims 1-14**

Claim 1 has been amended herein to recite the feature of a central bracket having a third mating member and a fourth mating member, with "the longitudinal axis of an elongated portion of

the fourth member being generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of an elongated portion of the third member.” The Examiner indicated that this feature and this particular language was allowable in the October 19, 2005, Office Action (page 10). Thus, claim 1, and claims 2-14 which depend therefrom, are now in an allowable condition.

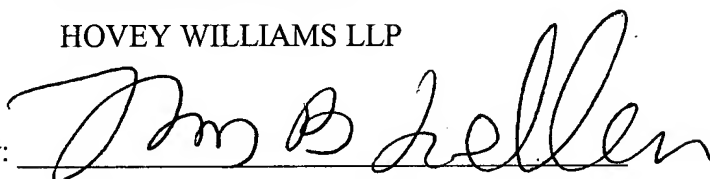
Conclusion

Due to the amendments made herein, claims 1-25 are now in allowable condition and Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. In the event of further questions, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned. Any additional fee which is due in connection with this amendment should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

HOVEY WILLIAMS LLP

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Thomas B. Luebbering, Reg. No. 37,874  
2405 Grand Blvd., Suite 400  
Kansas City, Missouri 64108  
(816) 474-9050  
ATTORNEYS FOR APPLICANT(S)